



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Two Dead Birds Positive for West Nile Virus in San Diego County

County Vector Control officials announced today that two Western Scrub Jays, one found in El Cajon and one in Tierrasanta, have tested positive for West Nile virus, bringing San Diego County's West Nile virus count to 8 dead birds. Last year in San Diego County at this time there were 80 birds that had tested positive for West Nile virus. "Even though the number of positive birds has shown a significant reduction since last year, residents still need to take the threat of West Nile virus seriously. We want to stress the continued importance of eliminating mosquito-breeding sources, and reporting dead birds to the Vector Control program," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the San Diego County Department of Environmental Health.

County residents should continue to take precautionary measures to avoid getting mosquito bites and acquiring the virus. The County's West Nile virus website, www.SDFightTheBite.com, has a comprehensive mosquito prevention checklist of common items and places that can become mosquito-breeding sources. Residents are urged to check their property weekly to ensure that water is not collecting in their yards. Mosquito fish that eat mosquito larvae before they hatch into biting adults can be used in larger closed water sources like horse troughs, decorative fountains, ponds and inoperable swimming pools. These free fish are available at 13 locations throughout San Diego County. Check the website for mosquito fish locations.

Vector Control continues to pick up and test crows, ravens, jays, hawks, owls, and falcons to monitor the spread of the virus. The public is encouraged to report dead birds that meet the following criteria: the bird has been dead for less than 24 hours, does not have a foul odor, is not covered with ants or flies, is not stiff; and the body is intact and has not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals. All other dead birds should be placed in a plastic bag and discarded in a covered trash can. While you cannot get West Nile virus from dead birds, wear disposable gloves if you must handle birds.

Other precautionary measures include wearing insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus; wearing long sleeves and long pants when outside, especially at dawn and dusk; and ensuring windows and screens are well-maintained to keep mosquitoes from entering the home.

For more information on West Nile virus, or to report mosquito breeding sites or dead birds please call the County of San Diego Vector Control at (888) 551-INFO (4636) or visit the County's West Nile virus website, www.SDFightTheBite.com. ###